

# Beautiful British Columbia **PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**



**A Guide to the Legislative Precinct**



## The Government of the Province of British Columbia

Parliamentary government in British Columbia dates from the inauguration of the first Legislative Assembly of the Colony of Vancouver Island, August 12, 1856. Responsible government, however, was not achieved until Confederation on July 20, 1871.

**The Lieutenant-Governor**, appointed by the Governor-General in Council, is the official representative of the Crown in the Province. He resides in Government House, one of the most stately homes in the capital city.

**The Legislature**, called the Legislative Assembly, comprises 55 members, who represent 48 electoral districts. The recognized leader of the party with the largest number of members-elect is normally called upon by the Lieutenant-Governor to form a government. The leader of the government is called **the Premier**.

**The Executive Council**, otherwise known as the Cabinet, comprises the Premier and his Ministers, all of whom are members of the Legislative Assembly. The Cabinet is responsible to the Legislative Assembly for the operation of government.

**Franchise** is extended to all Canadian citizens and other British subjects of the full age of 19 years who have resided in Canada for 12 months, and in the Province for six months immediately preceding application for registration as an elector.

Annual legislative sessions, which have normally been held in the spring, are presided over by **the Speaker**.





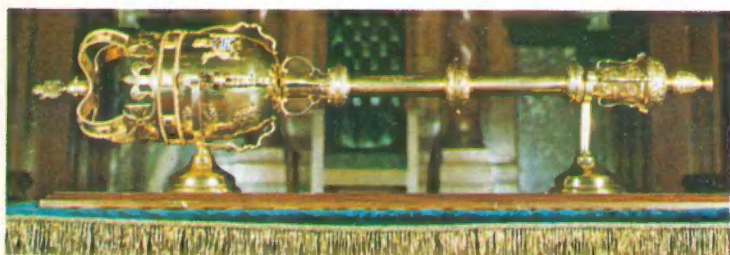
Following British parliamentary tradition, the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly holds the same power as the Speaker of the British House of Commons.

The Speaker is the representative of the Legislative Assembly in its relations with the Crown and other authorities and persons outside Parliament. He also presides over debates in the Chamber and enforces observance of rules and the preservation of order during proceedings.

The oak chair on the Speaker's dais sits under a carved oak canopy which bears the arms of the Province, the columns of the canopy entwined with ivy leaves. The date 1897 is carved as a reminder of the unfulfilled expectation that the Chamber would be ready for the Legislative Sessions during that year.

**The Sergeant-at-Arms** escorts the Speaker's entry into, and withdrawal from, the Chamber. He is provided with a desk, and is available at all times to enforce, if need be, the orders of the Speaker.

Today, whenever a Commonwealth legislature meets, a **mace** will be found in the House. The mace is the Speaker's authority as a servant of the House.





History of the development of the mace as an emblem of authority is traced back to mediaeval times. In earlier days it was a weapon of defence in close combat, particularly for ecclesiastics, who were denied the use of the sword. Associated with assembled lawmakers later, it served as a very efficient means of preserving order. Only gradually did it assume its present ceremonial role.

The present mace was first used at the opening of the Legislative Session in February 1954. Manufactured entirely of native British Columbia silver, its entire exterior is gilded. Weight of the mace is 11 pounds.

### ARCHITECTURE

In 1859 the original government buildings for the Colony of Vancouver Island were erected on the site now occupied by the Parliament Buildings. By the 1890's they proved inadequate. In 1892, architects throughout Canada and the United States were invited to submit plans for new buildings. Winner was Francis Mawson Rattenbury, of Victoria. He designed and supervised construction of the Empress Hotel and other public buildings throughout the Province as well. Construction of the Legislative Buildings began early in 1894 and, although still unoccupied, they were illuminated for the first time on June 21, 1897, to celebrate Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. The buildings were completed in October 1897 at a cost in excess of \$923,000. Formal opening was on February 10, 1898, in conjunction with the opening of the Legislative Session. East and west wings were built in 1914, and the south wing, housing the Provincial Library, was opened in November 1915.



Native British Columbia materials were used. Foundation and steps leading to the main entrance are granite from Nelson Island; slate for the roof is from Jervis Inlet; facing stone from Haddington Island; and native woods were used to finish many of the interiors.

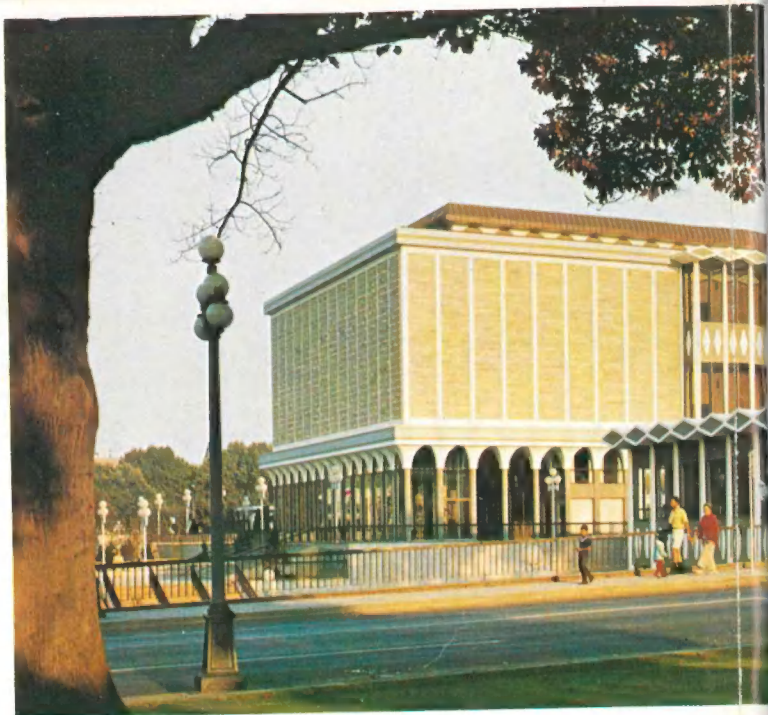
### LEGISLATIVE CHAMBERS

A spacious vaulted lobby gives access to the Legislative Chambers on the second floor. This nobly proportioned hall, 60 by 40 feet, is panelled with Italian marble and dominated by massive columns of sea-green marble, their Ionic capitals softly touched with gold. At the far end of the Chamber is the Speaker's dais, and immediately above is the Press Gallery. Public accommodation is provided for spectators. From the corridors may be reached the Committee Rooms, each panelled in a distinctive native wood.

### STATUES

Gilt statue of Capt. George Vancouver, R.N., noted British navigator, adorns the highest dome of the Legislative Buildings. At a lower level, statues of early intellectuals are in public view. They honour Milton, Sophocles, Shakespeare, Socrates, Dante, and Homer. Features of the exterior of the Library wing are the statues of a number of men who contributed to the development of this Province—Col. R. C. Moody, David Thompson, Sir Anthony Musgrave, Lord Lytton, Simon Fraser, Sir Alexander Mackenzie, Sir Francis Drake, Sir James Douglas, Capt. James Cook, Dr. John Sebastian Helmcken, Sir Matthew Begbie, Chief Maquinna, and Dr. John McLoughlin.



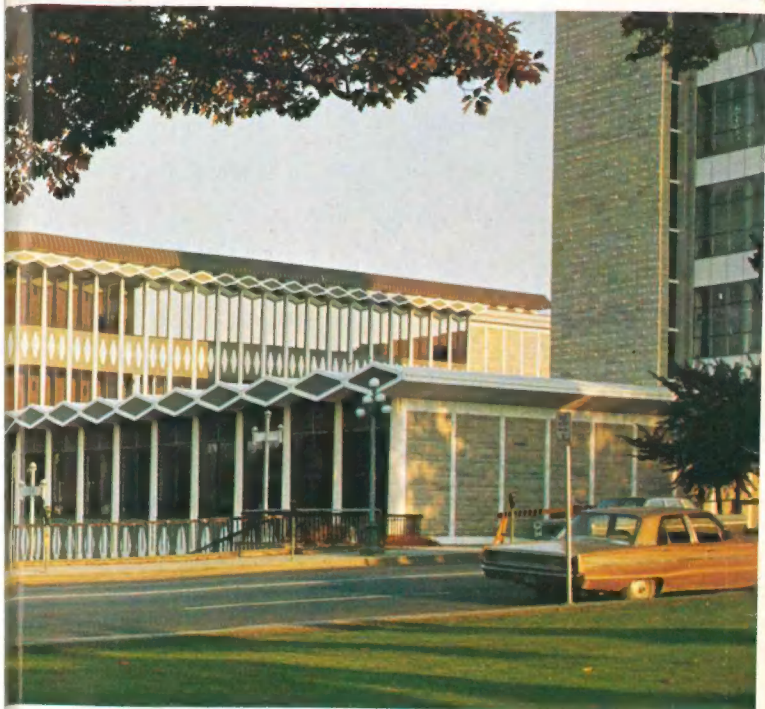


### PROVINCIAL LIBRARY

Cornerstone of the library wing was laid in 1912 by H.R.H. the Duke of Connaught, K.G., when he was Governor-General of Canada. The wing, designed by F. M. Rattenbury, was occupied in 1915. On its exterior walls are a series of engraved plaques of great literary figures and statues of significant persons associated with the history of British Columbia.

The main rotunda, in the classic tradition, is finished in Italian marble. Adjacent reference and reading-rooms are panelled in mahogany and decorated with fine examples of the wood-carving craft.

The library had its origin in 1863, when the Legislative Assembly of the Crown Colony of Vancouver Island appropriated funds for the purchase of books. In 1893 the first permanent librarian was appointed. Preceding the establishment of universities, the library became, in effect, the "learned library" for the Province. Covering a wide range of subjects, it now contains more than 500,000 volumes, exclusive of its extensive collection of British Columbia newspapers. When the Legislative Assembly is in session it serves as a legislative reference library. It also provides service to departments of Government and supplementary service to the people of the Province.



### **Heritage Court . . .**

In 1968 the new Museum-Archives complex known as Heritage Court was opened. This Federal-Provincial project commemorates the Centenary of Canadian Confederation.

Heritage Court consists of three buildings—Archives for the storage and study of historical documents, books, maps, photographs, etc.; Curatorial Tower, for the storage and study of birds, mammals, plants, marine life, historical, and anthropological objects; and the Exhibit building for display of Natural and Human History.

Outside the Exhibit building there are numerous stops of interest for the visitor. In front of the Museum building is a collection of rocks and fossils from various parts of the Province, including dinosaur footprints.



## MURALS

The lower rotunda is graced by four murals painted by George Southwell. They depict:

**Courage** to initiate new ventures is typified by the meeting of the British navigator, Capt. George Vancouver, R.N., with the Spaniard, Bodega y Quadra, at Nootka Sound, 1792.

**Enterprise** to organize is illustrated by the landing of James Douglas, of the Hudson's Bay Company, on Vancouver Island in 1842, and the selection of the site for the future Fort Victoria.

**Labour** to transform dreams into reality is represented by a scene during the building of Fort Victoria, 1843.

**Justice** to maintain a way of life is depicted by a Court scene at Clinton during the hard-fisted days of the Cariboo gold-rush in the 1860's, with Chief Justice Matthew Baillie Begbie presiding.

Four more murals in the Upper Rotunda symbolize mining, lumbering, fishing, and farming, British Columbia's basic industries.

## WINDOWS

Numerous stained-glass windows are located in different areas of the Legislative Building. Some emphasize the sage writings of famous literary figures of days of yore. Designed by James Blomfield, of Vancouver, they were manufactured in England. Total cost of these windows was less than \$12,000.

Stained windows in the Premier's Gallery draw attention to science, art, divinity, literature, labour, and commerce.





## Museum . . .

British Columbia's Provincial Museum is the largest in Canada west of Toronto, and is one of the oldest. Its doors were first opened in 1887 and for 71 years it was housed in the east wing of the Legislative Buildings.

It will take many years before the exhibit programme is complete. At present there are temporary displays relating to Natural History and Anthropology.

First permanent exhibit opened in July 1972. It leads the public back from our confusing technological present to a turn-of-the-century street scene, to the four primary industries when they were first introduced (mining, logging, fishing, agriculture), to the gold rush, fur trade, and finally to Captain Vancouver's ship HMS Discovery, a full-scale replica, stern to midships. Mentally, the visitor is transported from Vancouver Island to dockside in London. Eventually the exhibits will waft visitors back to the origin of man in Africa.

Since the new History Galleries opened, attendance has soared to more than 1,000,000 visits a year. The Museum is unquestionably the most outstanding free tourist attraction in the capital city.

School-children are conducted through the Museum in winter months by volunteer guides. They attend classes within the exhibits where various areas can be turned into temporary classrooms. In the railway station they learn the importance of rail-roading to British Columbia while surrounded by the sights and sounds of the steam railway—a memorable experience! Other children pan for gold beside a huge Cornish water-wheel.



## PROVINCIAL ARCHIVES

Although the existence of the Provincial Archives was not recognized officially until appointment of the first Provincial Archivist in 1908, the work of collecting material relevant to the history and development of British Columbia had begun many years earlier. Its extensive collections are now well known in the scholastic world.

Its library contains one of the finest assortments of books, pamphlets, and periodicals relating to the Pacific Northwest and British Columbia in particular. In addition to the records of Government from colonial times, it houses private papers of many persons who have contributed to the development of the Province, as well as business records. It also has numerous maps dating from the first efforts of explorers. Within its visual records section are thousands of photographs, lithographs, and engravings depicting the growth of British Columbia, as well as valuable paintings, the most noteworthy by Emily Carr.

All material is available to scholars and students for research purposes.

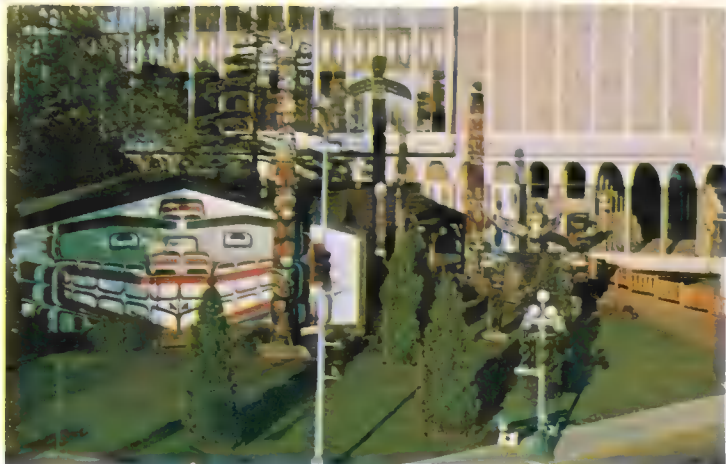
The **Carillon** structure in Heritage Court makes a most impressive contribution to the precinct. It was erected by the Provincial Government to house the Carillon which was a gift to the Province from the people of Netherlands origin now settled here, as their tribute to the Canadian Confederation Centennial in 1967. Originally it was equipped with 49 bronze bells, all cast in Holland. Her Majesty, Queen Juliana of the Netherlands, unveiled the cornerstone at the site of the Carillon on May 23, 1967.

In 1971, to commemorate another Centennial, the Netherlands donors contributed an additional 13 bells, making it the largest Carillon in Canada.

Carillon concerts are presented every Sunday starting at 3 p.m., and on most public holidays at 12 noon. In addition, the bells may be heard from June 15 through September 15 at noon on Wednesdays and at 7.30 p.m. on Fridays. Prior to Christmas, daily concerts of Christmas carols are featured.







### THUNDERBIRD PARK

Situated close to the Legislative Buildings, Thunderbird Park is one of the most-photographed spots in British Columbia. The park was established in 1940.

The collection of carvings and those in the Provincial Museum form the finest group of totem-poles in existence.

The Thunderbird, which gives the park its name, is a powerful and awesome creature of Indian mythology. Thunder was thought to be the flapping of its wings. According to some tribes, lightning was the flashing of its eyes. According to others, it was the belt, the Lightning Snake, with which it harpooned whales to carry back to its home in the mountain-tops to devour.

All exhibits in Thunderbird Park are authentic replicas of the originals. They have been carved by native craftsmen, who worked throughout to exact and true details.

Much of the work is done in public view.





### HELMCKEN HOUSE

(Elliot Street, South of Thunderbird Park)

Helmcken House is one of British Columbia's most valuable historical monuments.

The original portion of the house was built in 1852 as the home of Dr. J. S. Helmcken, a pioneer medical man who had married the daughter of James Douglas, first Governor of Vancouver Island. Dr. Helmcken was an active political figure and was one of three delegates who negotiated terms for entry of British Columbia into Canadian Confederation.

The oldest residence in British Columbia surviving in anything like its original state, it was opened as a museum in 1941. Many of the furnishings to be seen within it date back to colonial days. The house, open to the public at a minimal charge, lets visitors capture much of the nostalgia of pioneer living.



West of the Legislative Buildings on Menzies Street is another picturesque fountain in Confederation Square. Coats-of-arms of the various Canadian provinces are displayed.







### THE GROUNDS

The Legislative Buildings occupy 12¼ acres overlooking the Inner Harbour. In front, a broad expanse of terraced lawn is relieved by shade trees and attractive flower-beds.

The war memorial is a striking symbol, and a statue of Queen Victoria is impressive. Similarly significant is the obelisk commemorating Sir James Douglas, the Province's earliest statesman. An attractive fountain enhances the front grounds.

On the southern exposure of the site, the Centennial Fountain commemorates British Columbia's 100th birthday in 1958. The original geographic divisions are symbolized by figures of bear, eagle, wolf, and raven. The central section of the fountain features the sea otter.

During the summer months and on special occasions the entire facade of the Legislative Buildings is illuminated after sundown. It creates a setting of fairyland beauty.



## POINTS OF INTEREST

- The outline lights of the Legislative Buildings number 3,546. They are 2 candle-power carbon globes, equivalent to approximately 5 watts. Permanent wiring was installed in 1912 and many of the globes have been in service ever since. Although the nocturnal display is most impressive, the lights burn comparatively little electricity.

- The gilded statue of Captain Vancouver that surmounts the legislative dome is 7½ feet high. The top of the dome is 165 feet above ground-level, so the top of the Captain's cap is 172½ feet high. He was the first British navigator to circumnavigate Vancouver Island.

- The front face of the Legislative Building measures 288 feet.

- The original government buildings for the Colony of Vancouver Island were erected in 1859 on the site now occupied by the Legislative Building. Called the "Birdcages," they were of wood and brick construction.

- Construction of the present buildings began in 1894.

- Formal opening was presided over by Lieutenant-Governor Thomas R. McInnes on February 10, 1898.

- The South Wing, housing the Provincial Library and Archives, was opened in November 1915.

- The Douglas Building, on the east side of the Legislative Building, was formally opened by the Lord Mayor of London on August 31, 1951. The offices of many Government departments are housed in this building.

## QUEEN'S PRINTER

On Superior Street, at the rear of the main legislative complex, is the modern plant of the Queen's Printer. In this typographical centre are produced reports and proceedings of the Legislature and a proliferation of various Government brochures and forms. The Queen's Printer is obliged to attend at every legislative session and is seated on the floor of the Legislature.





## HERALDRY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

### Coat of Arms



**Arms** — Argent three bars wavy azure, issuant from the base a demi sun in splendour proper, on a chief the union device charged in the centre

point with an antique crown, or.

**Crest**—Upon an imperial crown proper, a lion statant gardant imperially crowned, all or.

**Supporters**—Dexter, a wapiti stag, proper. Sinister, a ram of the *Ovis Montana*, proper.

**Motto**—"Splendor Sine Occasu."

The motto is freely translated, "Splendour without diminishment."



### Flag . . .

When the armorial ensigns for the Province of British Columbia were granted by the College of

Arms in 1906 the design for a flag was also prepared. In 1960, by Order in Council, the display of the British Columbia flag was authorized.

Heraldic description of the flag is the same as that of the arms of the Coat of Arms, a free translation of which might be: "Three silver and blue wavy bars from the bottom of which a shining half sun in natural colours, under the Union Jack bearing in the centre a golden antique crown."

The Union Jack is symbolic of British Columbia's origin as a British Colony and its continued links with the United Kingdom. The Crown represents the sovereign power linking the British Commonwealth of Nations. The sun setting over the ocean is symbolic of the Province's geographic location as the most westerly Canadian Province.

## EMBLEMS OF BRITISH COLUMBIA



**Floral:** In 1956 the Dogwood (*Cornus Nuttallii*) was by statute adopted as the floral emblem of the Province.



**Mineral:** In 1968, by statute, jade (that is to say, the mineral species nephrite and jadeite) was adopted as the mineral emblem of the Province.



### WHERE TO FIND IT

1, Legislative Buildings; 2, Provincial Library; 3, Douglas Building; 4, Helmcken House; 5, Museum Curatorial Tower; 6, Archives; 7, Museum Exhibit Building; 8, Thunderbird Park; 9, Empress Hotel; 10, Department of Travel Industry; 11, Confederation Garden.

5, 6, and 7 comprise "Heritage Court" (Canadian Centennial Project).

Points of interest described in this brochure are all within easy walking distance from downtown Victoria. Further information may be obtained from the inquiry office at the main entrance to the Legislative Buildings, or from the Department of Travel Industry, 1019 Wharf Street.

For full information on British Columbia, write to:

Department of Travel Industry,  
1019 Wharf Street,  
Victoria, B.C.,  
Canada.

HON. ERNEST HALL, Minister  
R. L. COLBY, Deputy Minister

